



DARK NIGHTS

DEATH METAL

1

THE MULTIVERSSE WHO LAUGHS



AGES 13+

SNYDER - TYNION IV - WILLIAMSON - OSWALT - PALMIOTTI - CONNER - THOMAS - AHMED
GEDEON - GREENE - HARDIN - T. MANDRAKE - EATON - RAPMUND
SPICER - BARON - ANGIOLINI - S. MANDRAKE - HI-FI

DARK NIGHTS

DEATH METAL

THE

MULTIVERSE WHO LAUGHS

Still in the thrall of THE BATMAN WHO LAUGHS, the DC UNIVERSE remains overtaken by the DARK MULTIVERSE—52 Earths where evil has triumphed and nightmares have become reality, each more twisted than the last. Let the ROBIN KING introduce you to a collection of stories of worlds gone wrong: worlds where VICTOR ZSASZ grossly underestimates the powers at play in ARKHAM ASYLUM, where the SUPER-PETS are the last defenders of a dying Earth, where a LANTERN RING is an insidious thing, and where FEAR has infected the very air. The old rules no longer apply, and no one is laughing now...

ROBIN KING in SCARY STORIES TO TELL IN THE DARK MULTIVERSE

SCOTT SNYDER, JAMES TYNION IV, JOSHUA WILLIAMSON Writers
JUAN GEDEON Artist MIKE SPICER Colorist ALW'S TROY PETERI Letterer

ZSASZ in FEEDING THE BEAST

PATTON OSWALT Writer SANFORD GREENE Artist
DAVID BARON Colorist JOSH REED Letterer

THE SUPER-PETS in THE SUPER-THREATS!

AMANDA CONNER and JIMMY PALMIOTTI Writers CHAD HARDIN Artist
ENRICA EREN ANGIOLINI Colorist CARLOS M. MANGUAL Letterer

GREEN ARROW and GREEN LANTERN in HARD TRAVELED

SALADIN AHMED Writer SCOT EATON Penciller
NORM RAPMUND Inker HI-FI Colorist ALW'S TROY PETERI Letterer

STEEL in THE FEAR INDEX

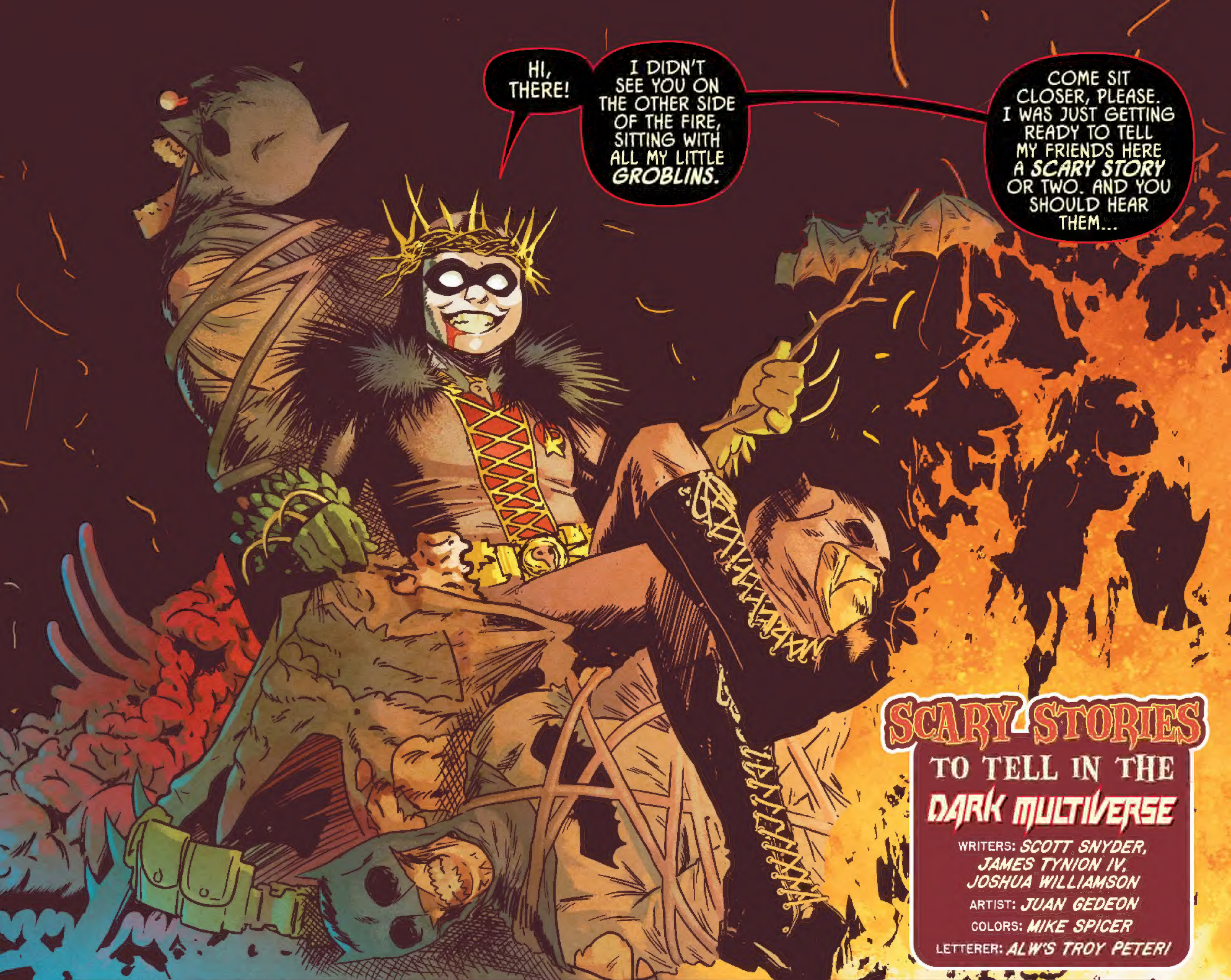
BRANDON THOMAS Writer THOMAS MANDRAKE Artist
SIAN MANDRAKE Colorist DERON BENNETT Letterer

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Variant Cover by SIMONE BIANCHI

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HI,
THERE!

I DIDN'T
SEE YOU ON
THE OTHER SIDE
OF THE FIRE,
SITTING WITH
ALL MY LITTLE
GROBLINS.

COME SIT
CLOSER, PLEASE.
I WAS JUST GETTING
READY TO TELL
MY FRIENDS HERE
A **SCARY STORY**
OR TWO. AND YOU
SHOULD HEAR
THEM...

SCARY STORIES TO TELL IN THE DARK MULTIVERSE

WRITERS: *SCOTT SNYDER,*
JAMES TYNION IV,
JOSHUA WILLIAMSON

ARTIST: *JUAN GEDEON*

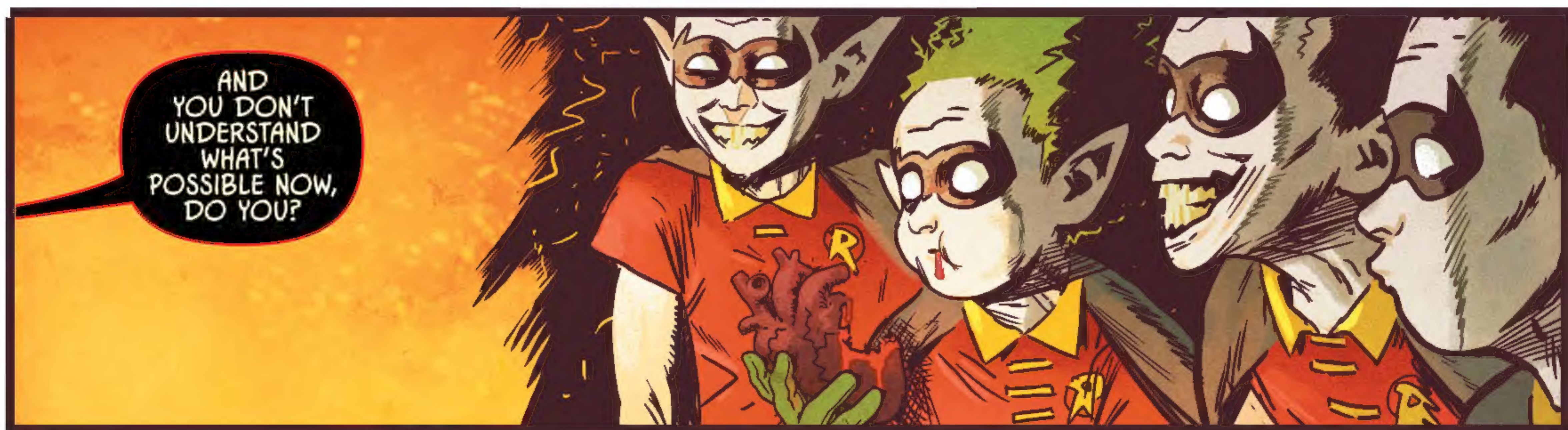
COLORS: *MIKE SPICER*

LETTERER: *ALW'S TROY PETERI*

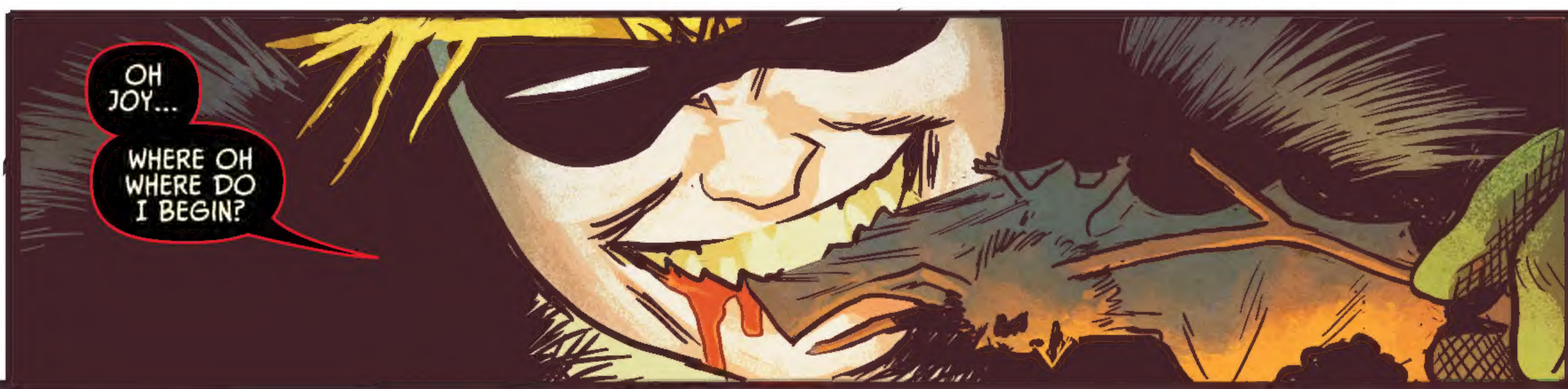


I MEAN, HOLY SMOKES.
WE'RE ALMOST AT THE
END NOW!

THE **OLD REGIME** IS TUMBLING
DOWN, AND WE'RE RIPPING OUT
ITS INSIDES AND **FEASTING**
ON THEM.



AND
YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND
WHAT'S
POSSIBLE NOW,
DO YOU?



OH
JOY...

WHERE OH
WHERE DO
I BEGIN?



"DO I START WITH THE DESPERATE SCIENTISTS ON A DOOMED WORLD WHO SAVED THEIR **LAST SON** BY SENDING HIM TO BE RAISED BY A KINDLY COUPLE ON EARTH?"



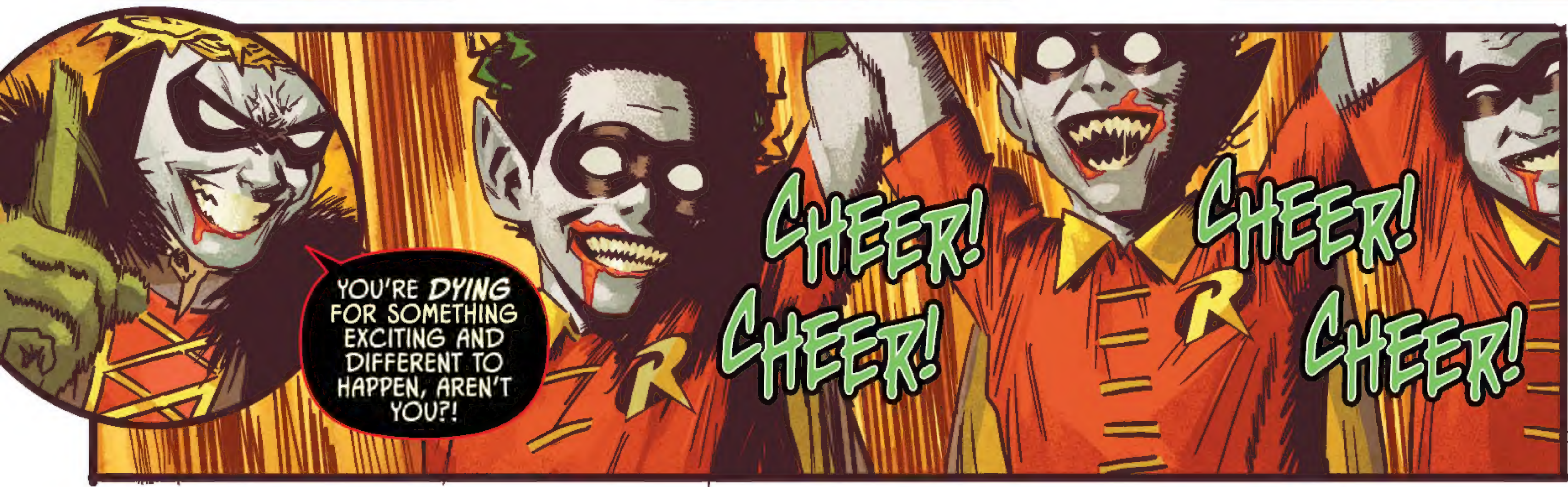
"OR WITH THE **PRINCESS** WHO LEAVES HER PARADISE ISLAND TO BRING PEACE TO THE WORLD OF MEN?"



"PERHAPS IT'S THE STORY OF A **BOY IN AN ALLEY** WHO LOSES EVERYTHING AND SWEARS AN OATH ON HIS DEAD PARENTS' BODIES TO DEDICATE HIS LIFE TO END ALL CRIME IN--"



WAIT. I CAN **SEE** YOUR EYES GLAZING OVER. YOU'VE HEARD THOSE STORIES BEFORE. YOU'RE **SICK** OF THOSE STORIES. THE STORIES ALWAYS GO THE WAY THEY'RE GOING TO GO, AND IF THEY DEVIATE EVEN SLIGHTLY, THEN THEY'RE TOSSED DOWN INTO THE WASTE BIN OF THE MULTIVERSE. DOWN IN THE DARK, WITH ALL OF **US**.



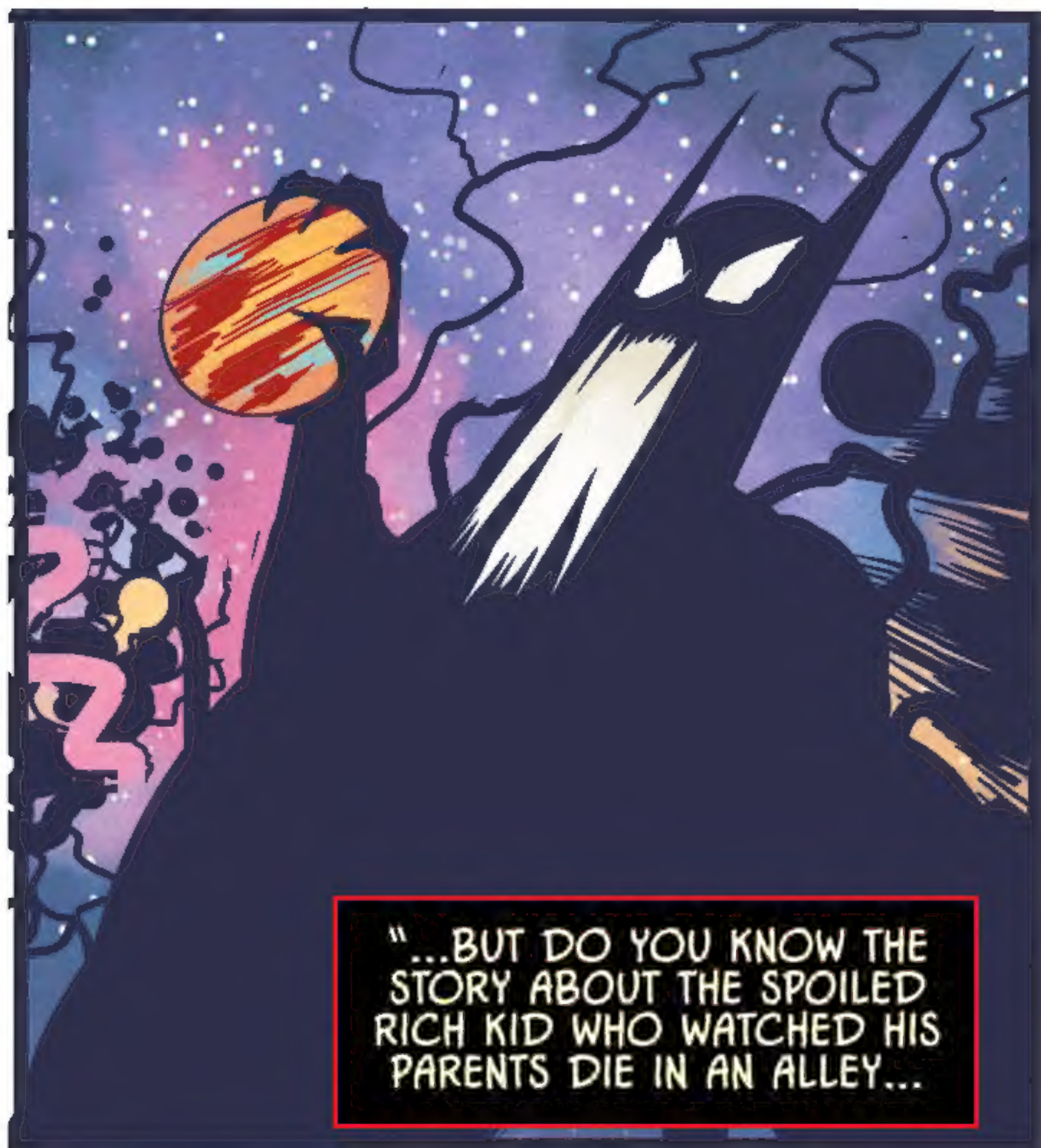
YOU'RE **DYING** FOR SOMETHING EXCITING AND DIFFERENT TO HAPPEN, AREN'T YOU?!

CHEER! CHEER! CHEER! CHEER!



WELL, YOU'RE IN LUCK. I **TOLD** YOU THIS WAS A **SCARY** STORY.

YOU ALREADY KNOW HOW I KILLED EVERY DUMB HERO ON MY WORLD AND BECAME **KING**...



"...BUT DO YOU KNOW THE STORY ABOUT THE SPOILED RICH KID WHO WATCHED HIS PARENTS DIE IN AN ALLEY...



"...WHO BECAME EVIL, TOOK OVER THE **WORLD** AND IS ABOUT TO KILL A **GOD**?"



"BECAUSE RIGHT THIS VERY MINUTE OUR **DARKEST KNIGHT** IS OUT THERE CHANGING ALL THE RULES!

"NO MORE HAPPY ENDINGS! NO MORE GOOD TRIUMPHING OVER EVIL!



"BECAUSE OF HIM, A WHOLE **NEW** KIND OF STORY IS RISING UP INTO THE MULTIVERSE ABOVE.

"THE STORIES THAT NEVER WOULD HAVE BEEN **ALLOWED** TO BE REAL BEFORE...

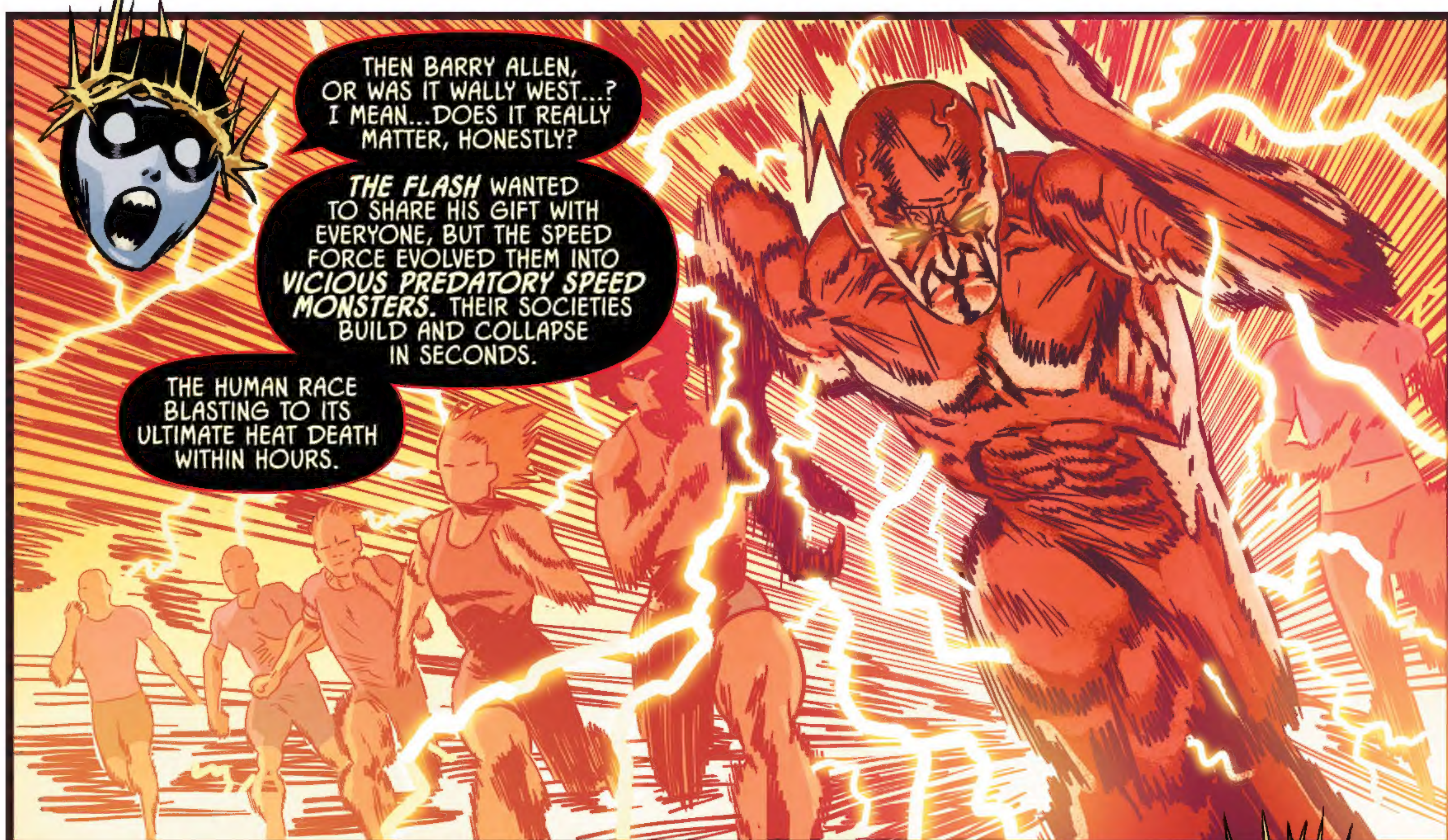


"...NOW THEY'RE THE **ONLY** GAME IN TOWN."



LIKE A WORLD WHERE THE LAST SON OF KRYPTON WAS JUST A WEE BABY BOY IN HIS WEE BABY ROCKET SHIP, WHEN HE PASSED THROUGH A **COSMIC RADIATION STORM** FROM A BLACK HOLE.

BY THE TIME HE CRASHED IN SMALLVILLE, HE WAS LEFT WITH A POWERFUL HUNGER THAT COULD ONLY BE SATISFIED WITH **BURNING HUMAN FLESH**.



THEN BARRY ALLEN, OR WAS IT WALLY WEST...? I MEAN... DOES IT REALLY MATTER, HONESTLY?

THE FLASH WANTED TO SHARE HIS GIFT WITH EVERYONE, BUT THE SPEED FORCE EVOLVED THEM INTO **VICIOUS PREDATORY SPEED MONSTERS**. THEIR SOCIETIES BUILD AND COLLAPSE IN SECONDS.


THE HUMAN RACE BLASTING TO ITS ULTIMATE HEAT DEATH WITHIN HOURS.



AND THEN THERE IS THAT GREEN MAN FROM MARS. HIS WHOLE RACE WAS KILLED SO HE DECIDED TO RESTART THEM HERE ON EARTH. BUT HE NEEDED **HOSTS**.

CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT ITS LIKE TO HAVE SOMETHING GROW INSIDE YOU THAT ONLY WANTS TO **KILL** YOU? NOT EVEN FIRE CAN BURN THAT IMAGE OUT OF MY MIND!






SEE, THIS IS THE GOOD STUFF. THESE ARE THE STORIES GROWN-UPS *SHOULD* TELL KIDS LIKE US.

BECAUSE THESE ARE HOW IT *REALLY* IS OUT THERE.


THE BRIGHT STORIES THAT THEY TELL US, *THOSE* ARE THE STUPID DREAMS.



BUT THIS IS NOT A *DREAM*, MY GROBLINS! THIS IS NOT A *HOAX*! THIS IS REAL, THIS IS NOW, AND THIS IS *FOREVER*. BECAUSE YOU REALIZE WHAT WE HAVE TO DO TO *REALLY* DEFEAT THE OLD STORIES?


WE HAVE TO *SULLY* THEM. WE HAVE TO TAINT THEM WITH SO MUCH HORROR AND GRIME THAT NOBODY WILL EVER BELIEVE THEM TO BE THE SHINING EXAMPLE.

THAT'S THE *GENIUS* OF OUR NEW GOD, OUR *DARKEST KNIGHT*. EACH OF THESE WORLDS IS A *SHARP* AND *DEADLY* WEAPON...



...THIS IS HOW THEY LOSE. ALL THE HEROES ON THEIR STUPID LITTLE WORLD. THEY'RE ABOUT TO UNDERSTAND...

...A MULTIVERSE WHO LAUGHS IS A MULTIVERSE THAT *WINS*.



NOW... ARE YOU READY TO TURN THAT PAGE, DEAR READER? BECAUSE THE HORRORS OUT THERE ARE READY FOR YOU!

TO BE CONTINUED!

THEY'RE OUT THERE.



CLEAN AND TERRIFYING.



FLESH MADE
PURE BY METAL.



I'VE ETCHED THE BLUEPRINT
FOR MY TRANSFORMATION...

...FROM THE MOMENT I
SENT STEEL INTO FLESH...

...AND PATIENTLY TAUGHT
MY BIRTH-FLESH...

...TO PREPARE
THE WAY...

...I'VE SEEN THE OTHERS,
THE UNPREPARED OTHERS...

...CLOWNS AND SCARECROWS
AND PENGUINS AND POSIES...

...MADE METAL.

IT TOOK SOME EFFORT TO
GET THEIR ATTENTION...

...MY MIND REELS...
WITH THE PLANS THEY
MUST HAVE FOR ME...

...PERHAPS I WILL BE MADE
A CONSECRATED SKIN VICAR...

...HAD TO TURN
THAT NURSE
INTO RIBBONS...

...MAYBE A
SPIRALING
SKIN-GOLEM...

...BUT NOW THEY'RE
TAKING ME WHERE I'LL
BECOME TRANSFORMED...

...WHAT IF THEY
PULLED ME OPEN...

...A LIVING WOUND ON
REALITY...A DOORWAY
FOR NIGHTMARES...

...TO WHERE THE METAL CHOOSES
FROM THE ELECT OF EVIL, THE ACME
OF AGONY, FROM THE ONES WHO ARE
THE DARKNESS BEYOND DARKNESS. I
WILL BE PLUCKED FROM THAT ZENITH...

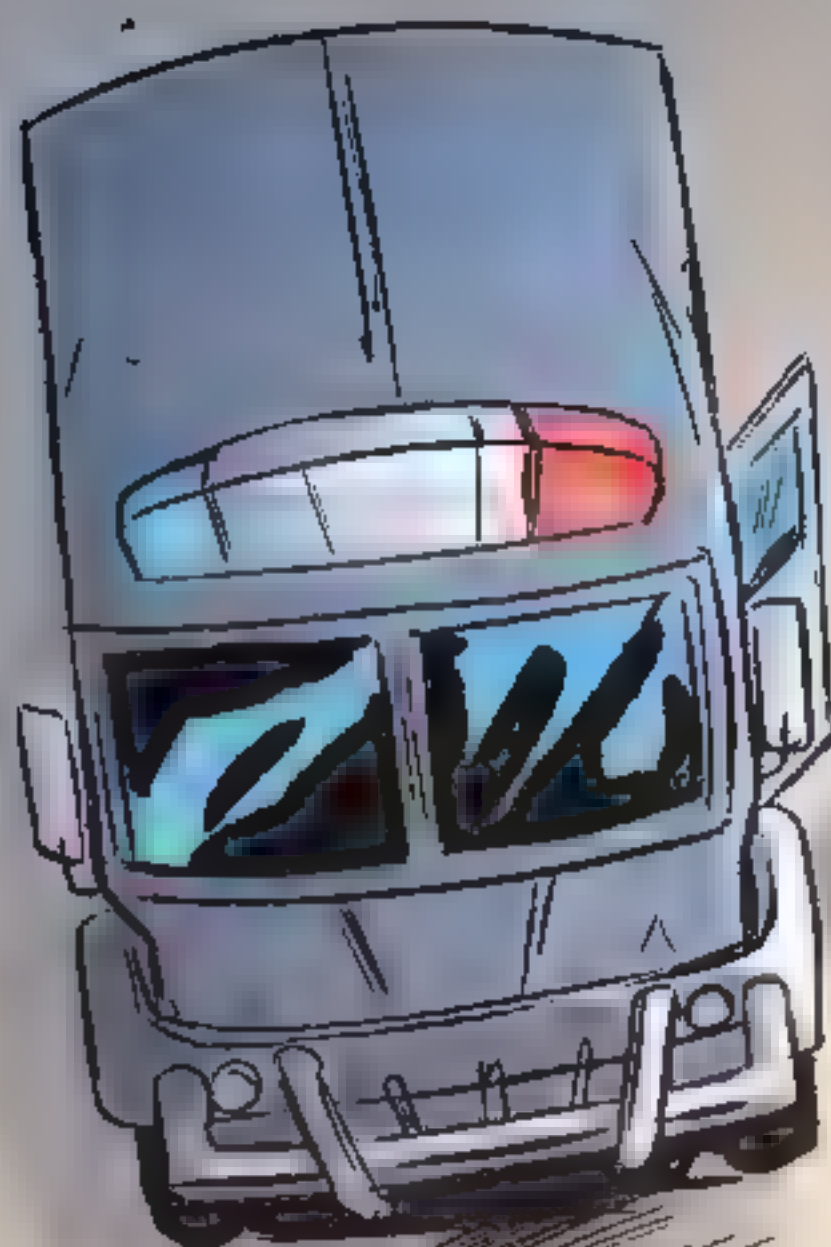
...ONLY BLADES ONLY BLADES
ONLYBLADESONLYBLADES...



FEEDING THE BEAST

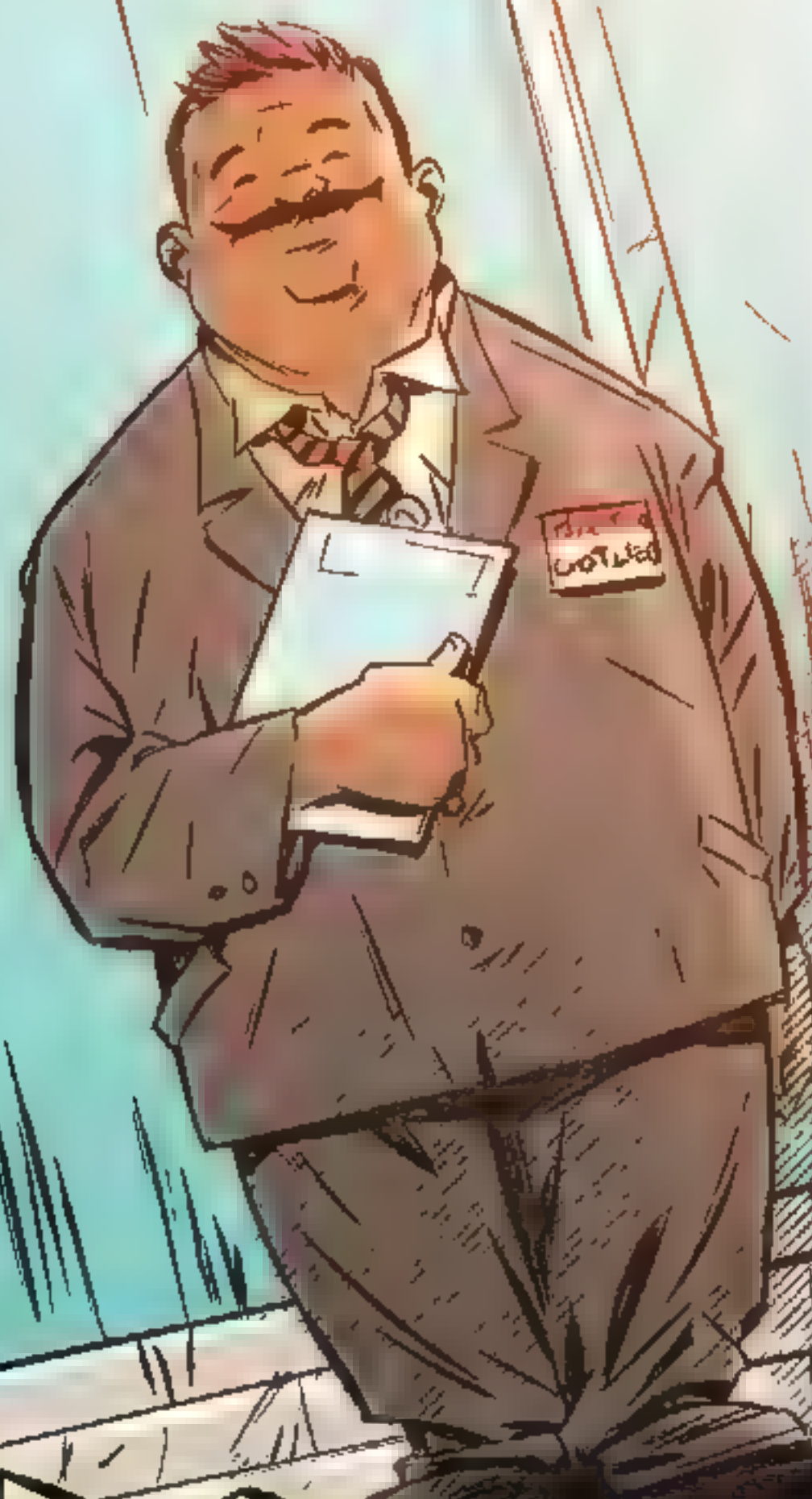
PATTON OSWALT writer • SANFORD GREENE artist
DAVID BARON colorist • JOSH REED letterer

INTAKE.



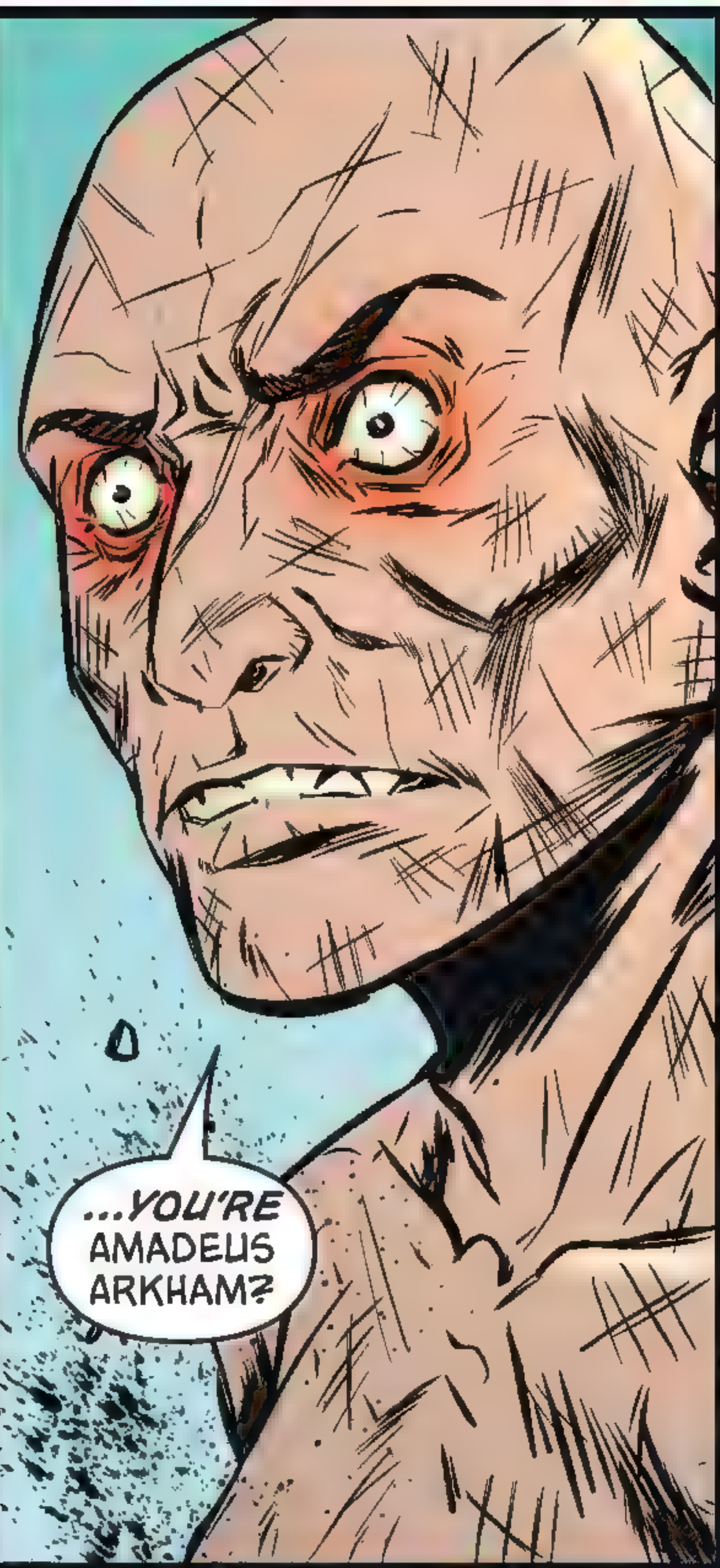
THIS...IS ARKHAM?

I HOPE
WE MEET AS
FRIENDS,
VICTOR.



ARKHAM
ASYLUM

Hi! I'm
GOTTLIEB



...YOU'RE
AMADEUS
ARKHAM?

AMADEUS?
GOTTLIEB'S THE
NAME. SAW THE MOVIE
IN HIGH SCHOOL THOUGH.
REAL CORKER. MADE ME
TAKE UP OBOE FOR A WHILE
BUT THEN I DISCOVERED
MATHLETES AND THAT
WAS ALL SHE WROTE.
HAR!





...I DON'T
KNOW WHY. I
GUESS I JUST
LIKE *KITES*?

GROUP THERAPY.

WONDERFUL,
CHARLES!

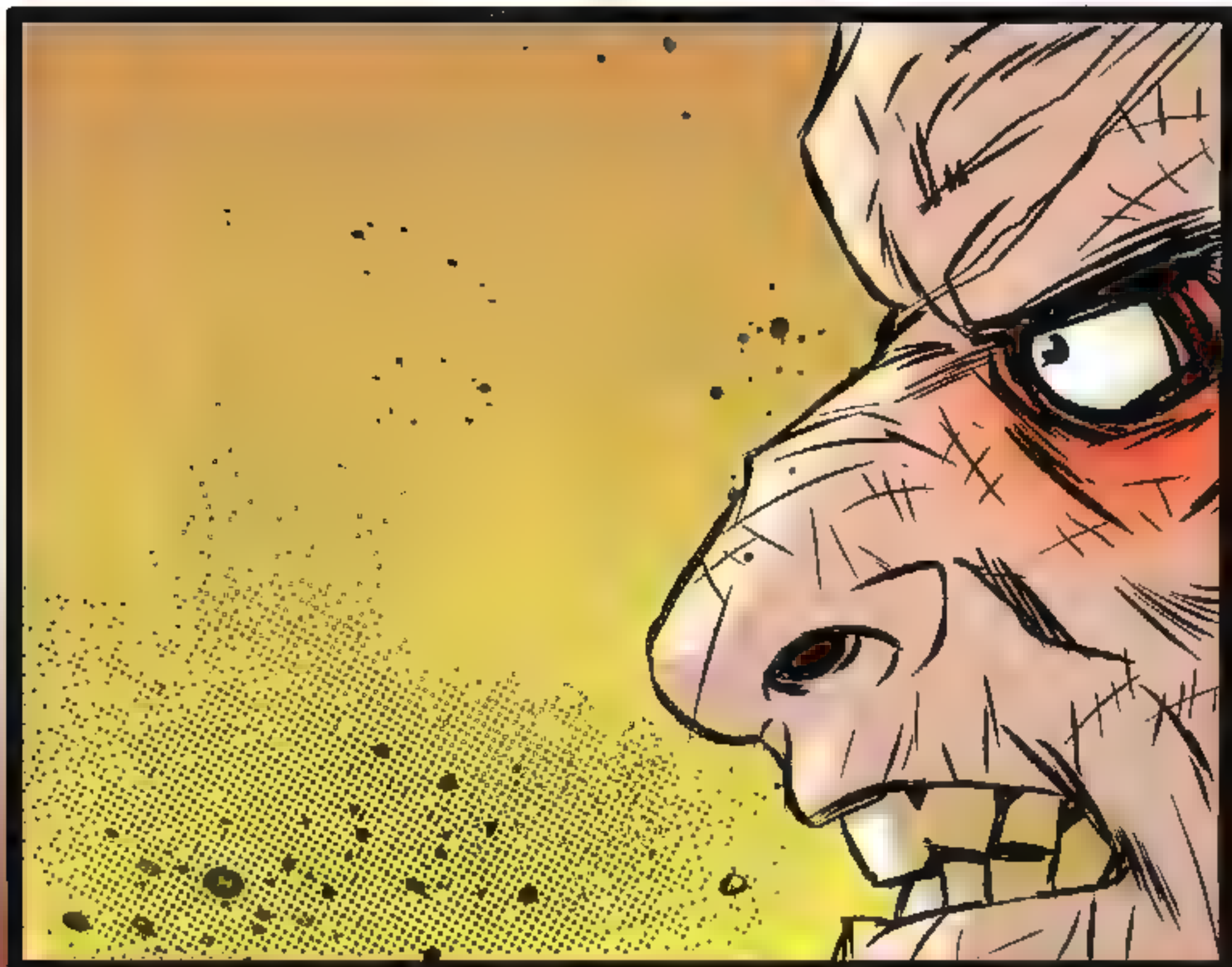
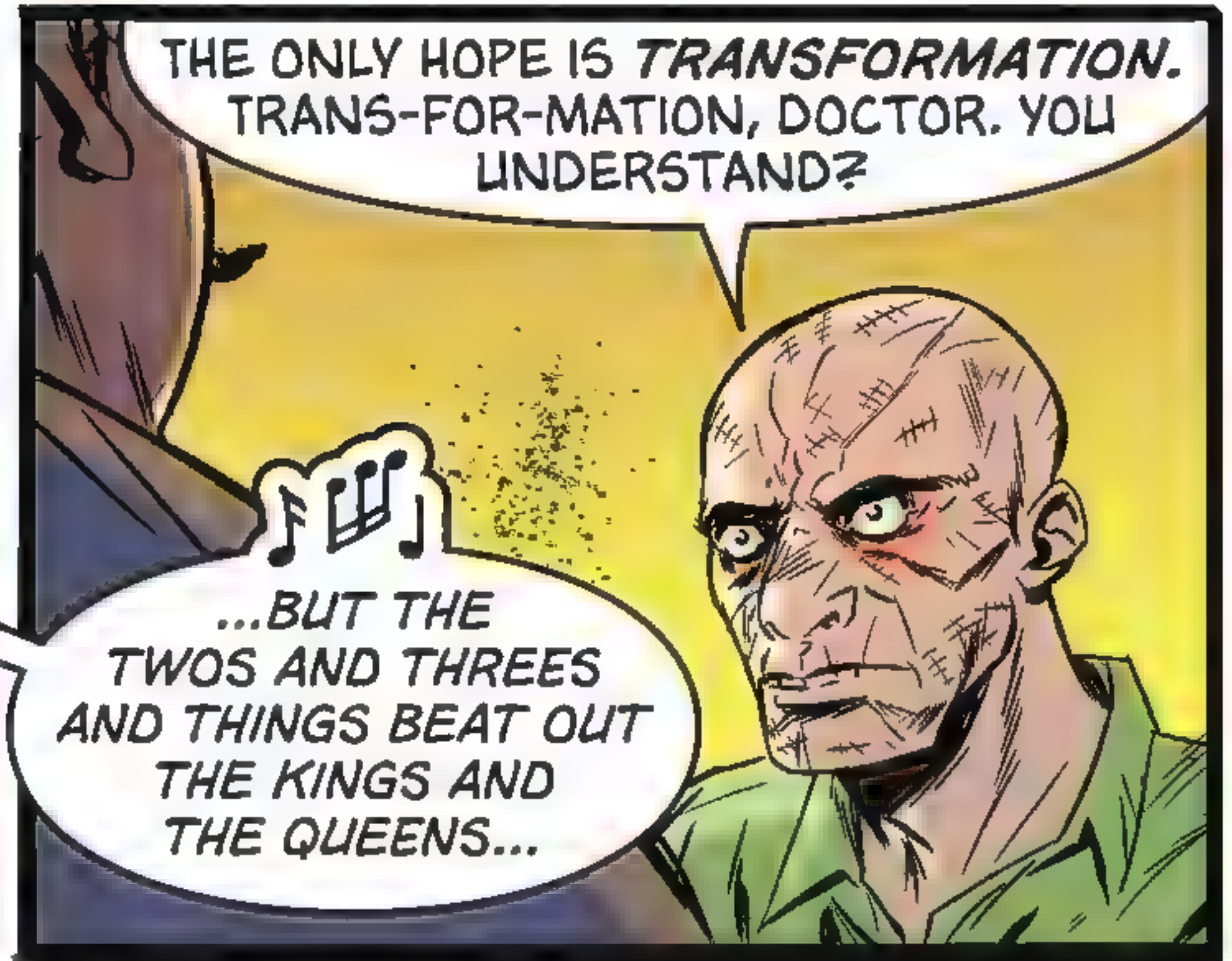
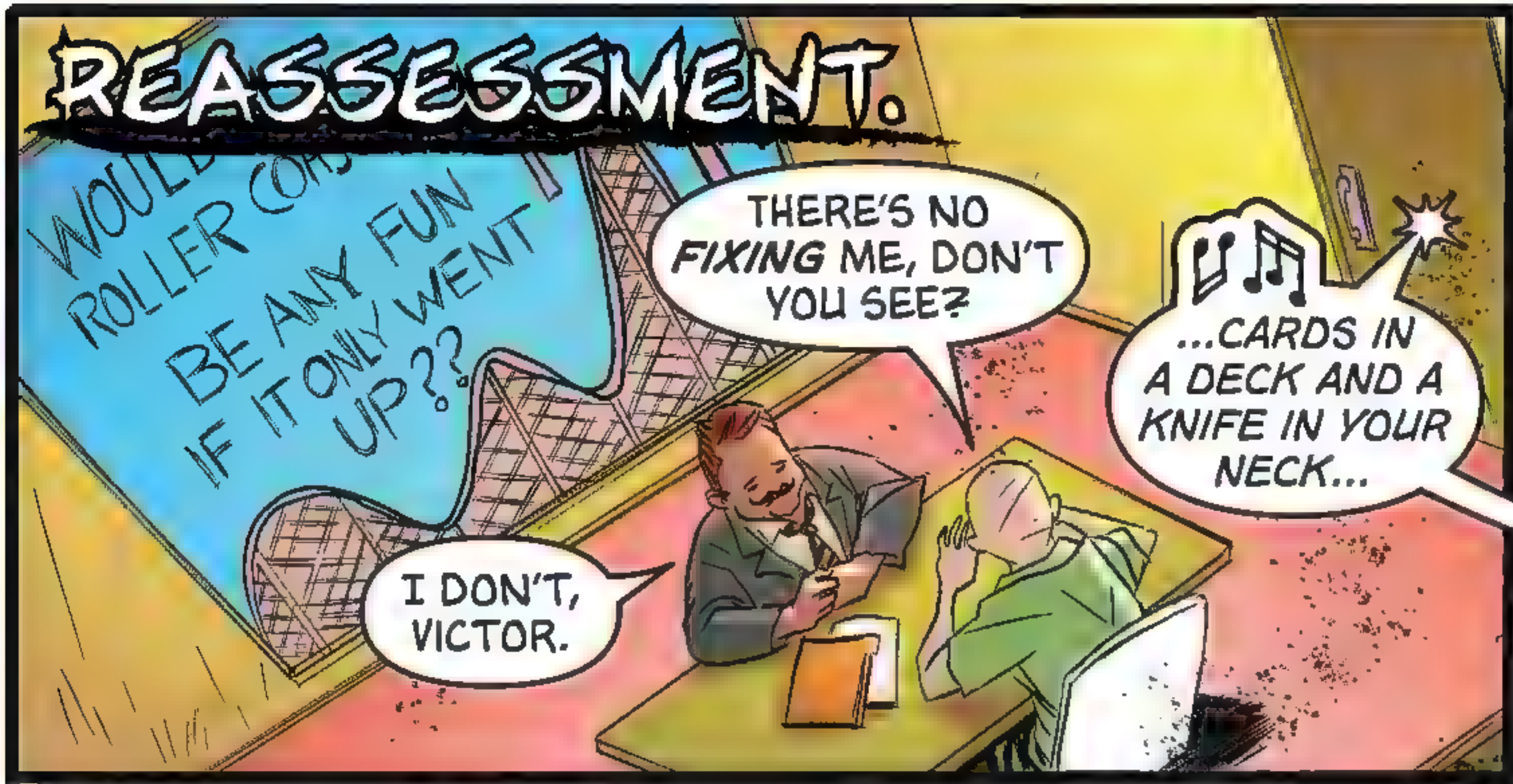
KITE MAN. CHARLES
BROWN. GOOD GRIEF.

WOULD YOU
LIKE TO TELL
SOMETHING TO
OUR SHARING
CIRCLE,
VICTOR?

...STAY OUT OF THE
SHARING CIRCLE, NEW
BEST FRIEND...

I'LL LET
THE *METAL* SPEAK
FOR ME.

SHRK!



ART THERAPY.





EVERYTHING IS A KITE.

IT CAN BE, CHARLES. COME WITH ME.

SHARING CIRCLE.

I WANT IT TO BE.

TO THE...?

An inset comic panel showing the man in the green shirt from the main image, looking down with a sad expression. To his right, a man with a mustache, wearing a brown jacket, is partially visible, looking towards the man in the green shirt.



NO!
WRONG!



VICTOR,
I DON'T WANT
TO BE *RUDE* BUT
I'M BUSY WITH
KITE MAN...

SHARING CIRCLE.



I...HAVE KILLED...*HUNDREDS*.
I'VE WRENCHED LIFE FROM
THIS PLANET AND ETCHED
EVERY LOSS INTO
MY FLESH!

YOU
MURDERED
117 PEOPLE
AND KEPT A
COUNT.



AND YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE
THIS...*GIMMICK MONKEY*...
THE GIFT OF DEATHLESS
FLESH AND *LIVING*
METAL?

YES.

YOU
CRAWLING
PENCIL
PUSHER.

I DO NOT
CRAWL.



YOU ARE GOING TO INJECT ME WITH
THAT TRANQ GUN AND STRAP ME
TO THAT TABLE AND YOU ARE GOING
TO *TRANSFORM ME*. OR YOU'LL
SPEND THE REST OF YOUR
PAINFUL LIFE DREAMING
OF BEING ABLE
TO CRAWL.

YOUR FIRST
TEN WORDS WERE
CORRECT.



Hi! I'm
GOTTLIEB

PEEK AND SHRIEK.

DON'T
TRY TO SPEAK,
VICTOR.

AS YOU CAN
PROBABLY TELL,
THAT WASN'T A
TRANQUILIZER.

FAR
FROM IT.

I APOLOGIZE
FOR THE PAIN YOU'RE
EXPERIENCING, BUT
IT'S NECESSARY.

THE
HIGH LEVEL
OF PAIN IS TO
IMMOBILIZE
YOU.

CHARLES
WILL BE *HUNGRY*
ONCE HE'S DONE
TRANSFORMING. A FEAR-
FILLED BAG OF BLOOD
AND ADRENALINE WILL
HELP WITH THE
TRANSITION.

OH,
HERE COMES
ANOTHER SURGE,
I'M AFRAID...

...RRREEEEHHH...

...AS I SAID
EARLIER, YOU
MURDERED 117 PEOPLE.
MINDLESSLY, ARTLESSLY,
COMPULSIVELY. THE DARK
METAL CRAVES VIOLENCE
BUT IT ALSO CRAVES
CRAFT.

WE HAVE
MORE THAN
ENOUGH KILLERS,
VICTOR. THE SURFACE OF
THE EARTH IS CRAWLING
WITH AND CLEANS'D
BY THEM.

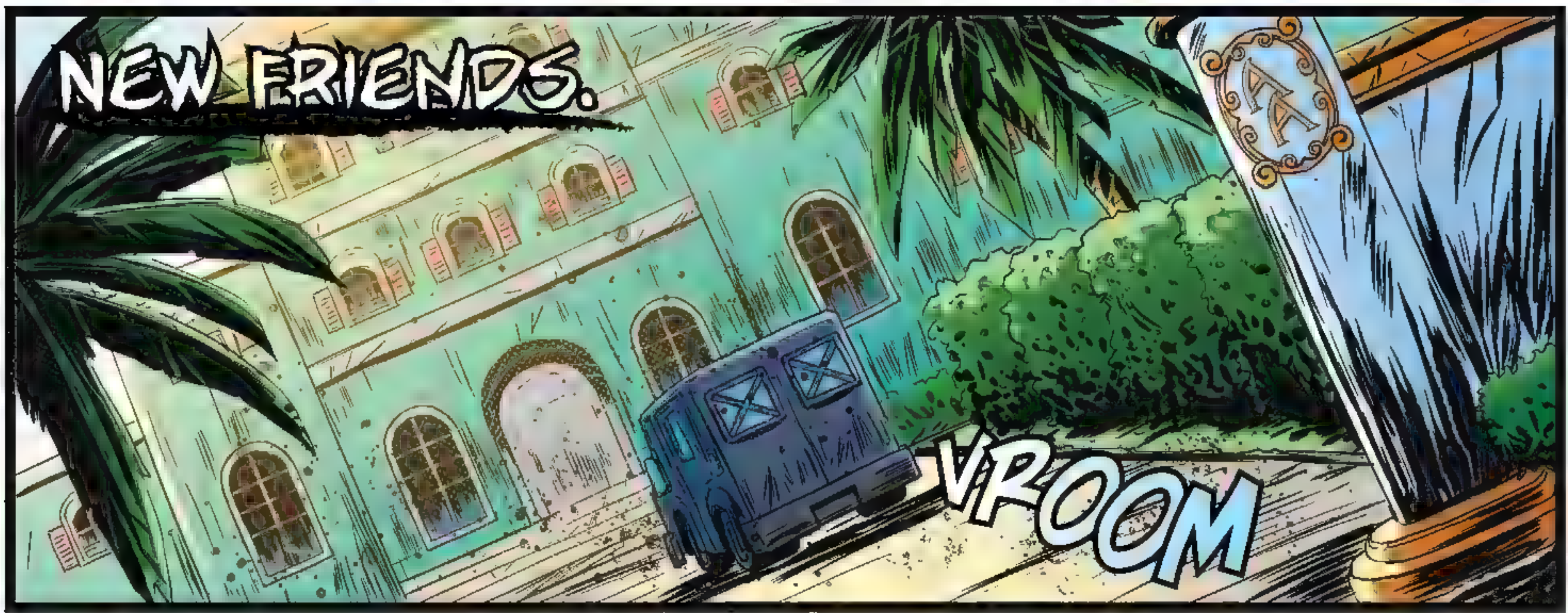
...RRRRRRREEEEHHHH...

WE HAVE DEATH,
DARKNESS, AND SORROW.
NOW WE WANT MUSIC,
POETRY, AND WHIMSY.
OUR MUSIC.

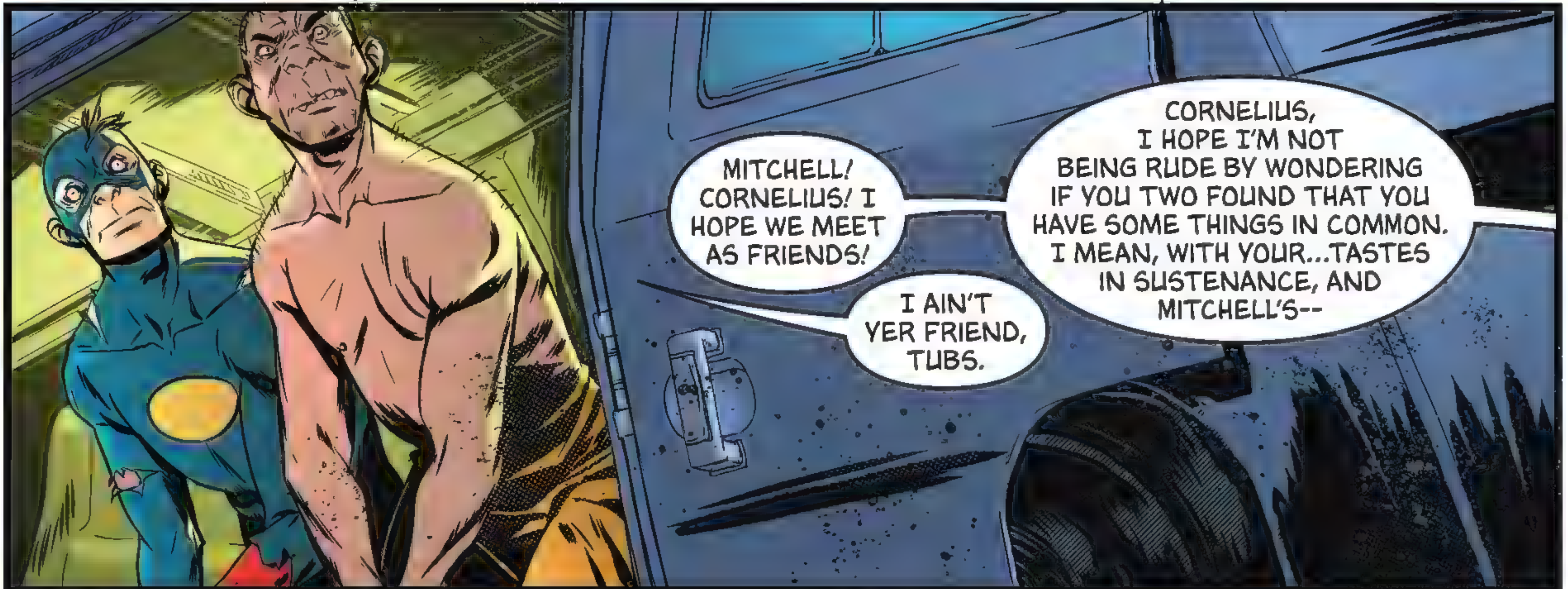
...RREEEEHHHAAAAAHHHHH!

YOU
WOULDN'T
LIKE IT.

Hi! I'm
GOTTIEB



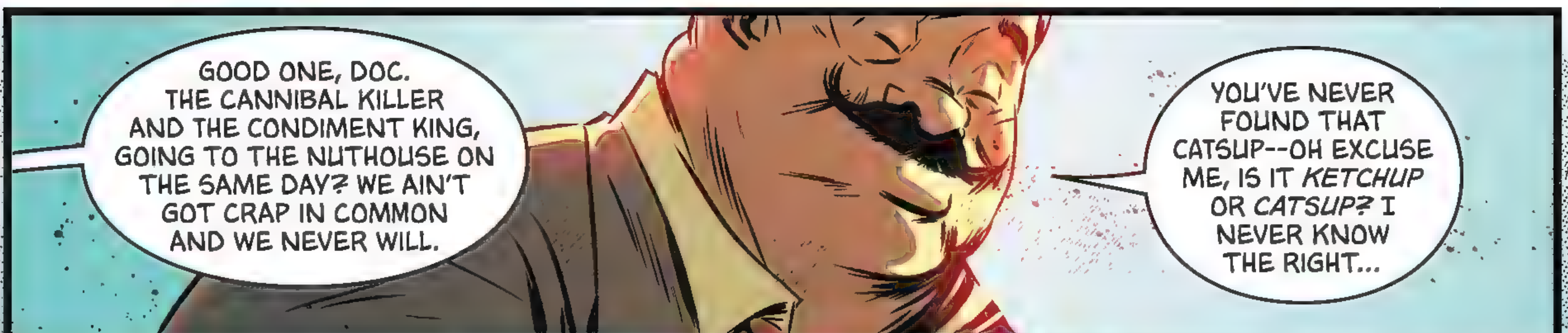
NEW FRIENDS.



MITCHELL!
CORNELIUS! I
HOPE WE MEET
AS FRIENDS!

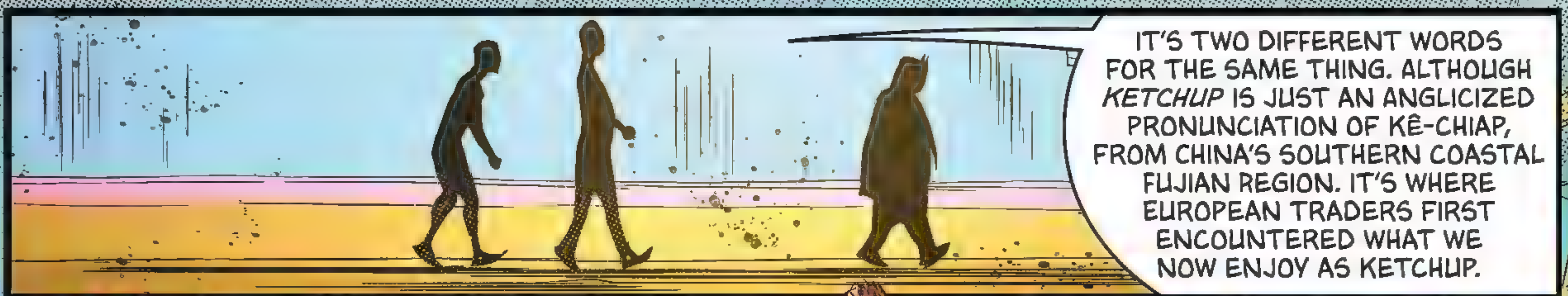
I AIN'T
YER FRIEND,
TUBS.

CORNELIUS,
I HOPE I'M NOT
BEING RUDE BY WONDERING
IF YOU TWO FOUND THAT YOU
HAVE SOME THINGS IN COMMON.
I MEAN, WITH YOUR...TASTES
IN SUSTENANCE, AND
MITCHELL'S--



GOOD ONE, DOC.
THE CANNIBAL KILLER
AND THE CONDIMENT KING,
GOING TO THE NUTHOUSE ON
THE SAME DAY? WE AIN'T
GOT CRAP IN COMMON
AND WE NEVER WILL.

YOU'VE NEVER
FOUND THAT
CATSUP--OH EXCUSE
ME, IS IT KETCHUP
OR CATSUP? I
NEVER KNOW
THE RIGHT...



IT'S TWO DIFFERENT WORDS
FOR THE SAME THING. ALTHOUGH
KETCHUP IS JUST AN ANGLICIZED
PRONUNCIATION OF KĒ-CHIAP,
FROM CHINA'S SOUTHERN COASTAL
FUJIAN REGION. IT'S WHERE
EUROPEAN TRADERS FIRST
ENCOUNTERED WHAT WE
NOW ENJOY AS KETCHUP.



I GUESS THAT'S WHY
THEY CALL YOU THE
CONDIMENT
KING!

YOU KNOW
GOTTLIEB IS JUST
THE GERMAN VERSION
OF AMADEUS. YOU
EVER SEE THAT
MOVIE?

ONE OF MY
FAVORITES!

SOMEBODY
KILL ME.

THE END.



ONLY ONE WEEK AWAY
FROM EARTH, BUT FEELS
LIKE 49 WHOLE DAYS.
WILL BE GOOD TO
GET HOME TO...

WAIT A MINUTE. HOW
CAN THAT BE?



HOW DOES EARTH
HAVE A RING
AROUND IT?



THIS IS BAD.

The Super-THREATS!

WRITERS: AMANDA CONNER AND JIMMY PALMIOTTI
ARTIST: CHAD HARDIN COLORIST: ENRICA EREN-ANGIOLINI
LETTERER: CARLOS M. MANGUAL



WHAT WENT
ON WHILE I WAS
AWAY?!

METEORS?

ALIENS?

OR DID EARTH
HUMANS BLOW US
ALL UP?

I KNOW WHERE TO
GET AN ANSWER--



--OH NO!
THE HALL OF
JUSTICE!

CAN ANYONE
STILL BE ALIVE?



HELLOOOO!
IS ANYONE
HOME?

AYE!
KRYPTO!
WE ARE IN
HERE!



YOU'RE
BACK! IT'S
SO GOOD
TO SEE
YOU!

GREAT
SCOTT,
COMET!

WHAT
HAPPENED?



WHAT HAPPENED
WAS THAT YOU
WEREN'T **HERE**
WHEN WE NEEDED
YOU **MOST**!

STREAKY, THIS
WAS NOT KRYPTO'S
FAULT.

IT WASN'T?
IF HE'D BEEN
HERE, WE :GAK:...
WE WOULD HAVE
HAD A...:GAK:...
:KAK:

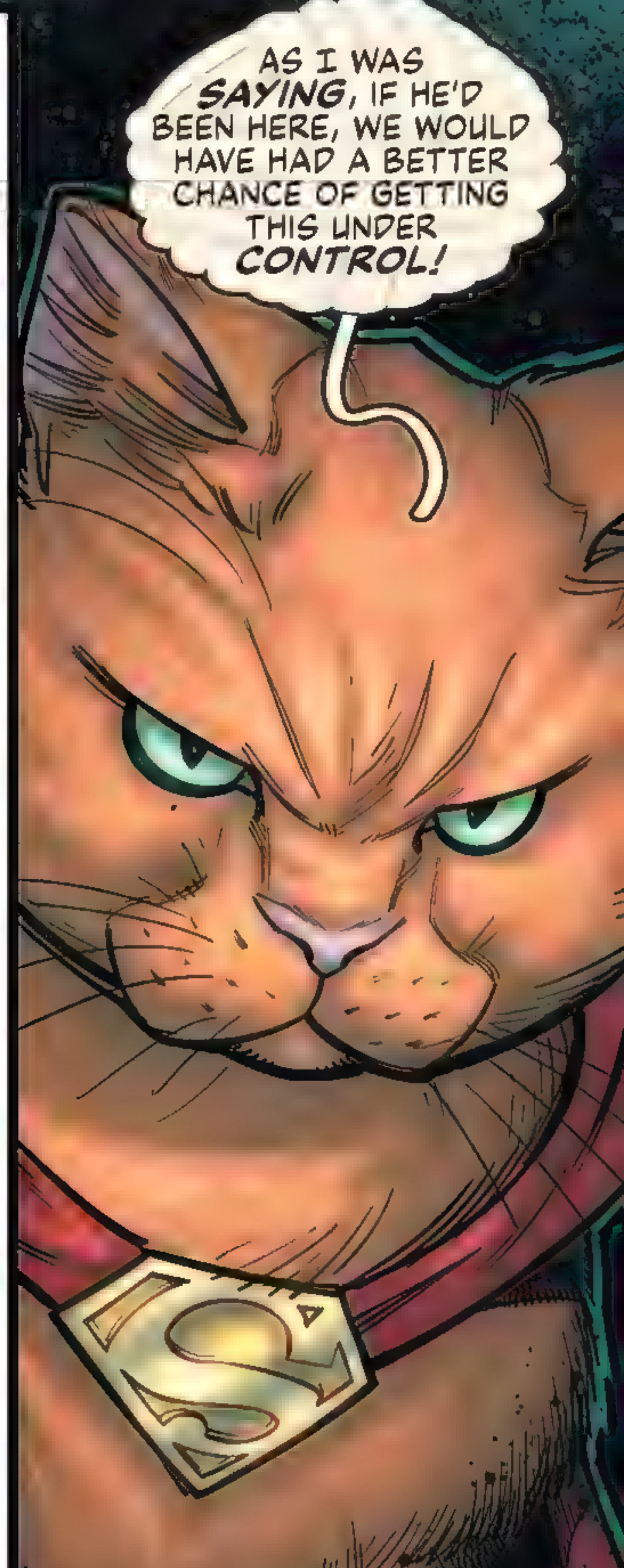
HAIRBALL?



:KAK:
:KAKK:



:GGAAAKKKK:



AS I WAS
SAYING, IF HE'D
BEEN **HERE**, WE WOULD
HAVE HAD A BETTER
CHANCE OF GETTING
THIS UNDER
CONTROL!

IN JUST 24 HOURS...
THE **VIRUS**... IT SPREAD
LIKE WILDFIRE. THE PLANET
WENT CRAZY. EVERYONE
TURNED ON EVERYONE ELSE,
INCLUDING **US**.

ACE, IF I MAY
EXPLAIN...

WE WERE GOING OVER THE DAY'S EVENTS, CATCHING UP WITH EVERYONE'S LATEST ADVENTURES, WHEN IT HAPPENED.

AND TURNS
OUT THE MAIN
COMPUTER HAD A
GLITCH THAT SHUT
DOWN THE
ENGINES.

FINISHED PAPERWORK
FER YOU GUYS AN' THEN I
HADDA SEE THE DOCTOR
ABOUT EAR MITES.

I GOT MILKED.

THAT
WAS FUN.

THE
LEGION OF DOOM'S
23RD DEADLIEST
MEMBER!

THE WHITE OF HIS
EYES IS YELLOW, AN'
THE YELLOW OF HIS
TEETH IS RED!

HE LOOKS
INSANE!

**NAY! GET
BACK, YOU
DROOLING
BRUTE!**

COMET,
MOVE
YOUR HIND-
QUARTERS!

**SUPER-PETS,
ATTACK!**

Января

ACE! STREAKY!
NATHAN! **STAND
BACK!**

I WILL
TRANQUILIZE
HIM!

THWIP

THWIP

THWIP

[illegible]

QUICKLY,
HELP ME GET
HIM TO THE
LAB!

BAT-COW! TEND
TO COMET'S
WOUNDS!



THIS IS WORSE THAN I THOUGHT... THERE IS SOME KIND OF **INFECTION** IN HIS SYSTEM.

IT'S LIKE NOTHING I'VE SEEN BEFORE.



IT SEEMS OUR OLD ENEMY HAS BEEN WEAPONIZED TO SPREAD THE VIRUS THROUGH CONTACT.

WERE ANY OF YOU **BITTEN**?

SCRATCHED?

LICKED OR DROOLED ON?

ARE ANY OF YOU FEELING **WARM**, MAYBE **DISORIENTED**?



GUYS?



NRRR-HRR-HRR-HRRRAAAHHHRR

MEEAAAAHHHRR

WOONRAAAHHHRR

MOOOOOOAAHHHRR

GRRRAAAHHHRR



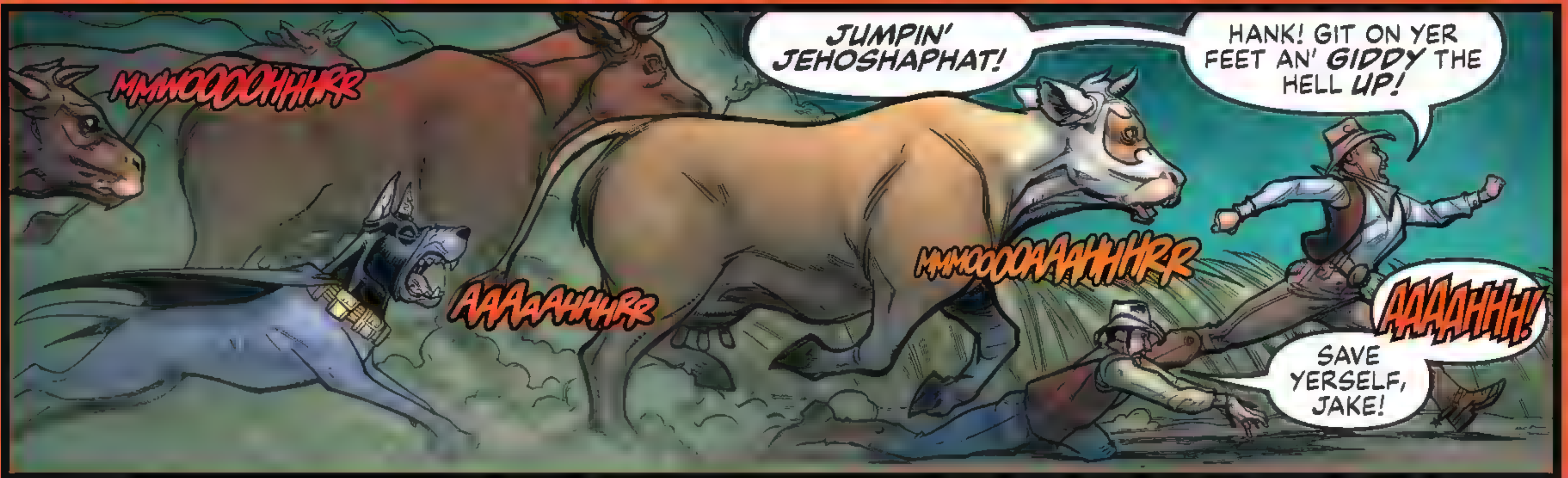
EEE-EEE-EEYIKES!

COMPUTER, INITIATE CONTAINMENT SEQUENCE...

SUPER-PETS, **HOLD TIGHT!** I'LL TRY TO FIND SOME KIND OF CURE!

STAY RIGHT THERE AND DO YOUR BEST TO REMAIN CALM!

SLAMM





ALL ON EARTH ARE **DEAD**. WE ARE THE SOLE SURVIVORS.

I ONLY HAD TIME TO PRODUCE ENOUGH OF THE CURE FOR US.

ONCE THE VIRUS TAKES HOLD, DEATH OCCURS IN NINETEEN HOURS. I HAD TO ACT QUICKLY TO SAVE OUR TEAM.



NO... THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! I HAVE A WIFE AND **SIX PUPS!**

CORRECTION. **HAD.**

REALLY, STREAKY, HAVE SOME SYMPATHY.



ANYONE ELSE FEELING **WARM?**

I'M FEELING **HUNGRY...** LIKE, REALLY HUNGRY.

ME TOO. I FEEL LIKE **KILLIN'** SOMETHING. **ANYTHING.**

ANYTHING... ANYONE--

EVERY-ONE...



BEPPPO, WHAT'S HAPPENING?

I-I HAD NO TIME TO TEST THE CURE. THESE WEREN'T NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES...

LISTEN, FRIENDS, LET ME SEDATE YOU ALL AND SEE IF--

GHRRRAAAAHHR



END

NEW DA SUBSECTOR 070.

FORMERLY KNOWN AS STAR CITY.

YOU
SURE THIS IS
THE RIGHT
WAY?

I'M
TELLING YOU,
THE MESSAGE
SAID HE'D BE
DOWN THIS
ALLEY!

HONOR THE GUARDIANS
RESPECT THE CURFEW

MIGHT NOT MATTER. THOSE
STEEL GUARDIANS ARE
RIGHT BEHIND US.

IF
THEY
CATCH
US--

DON'T
WORRY...

...THEY'RE
NOT GONNA
CATCH
YOU.



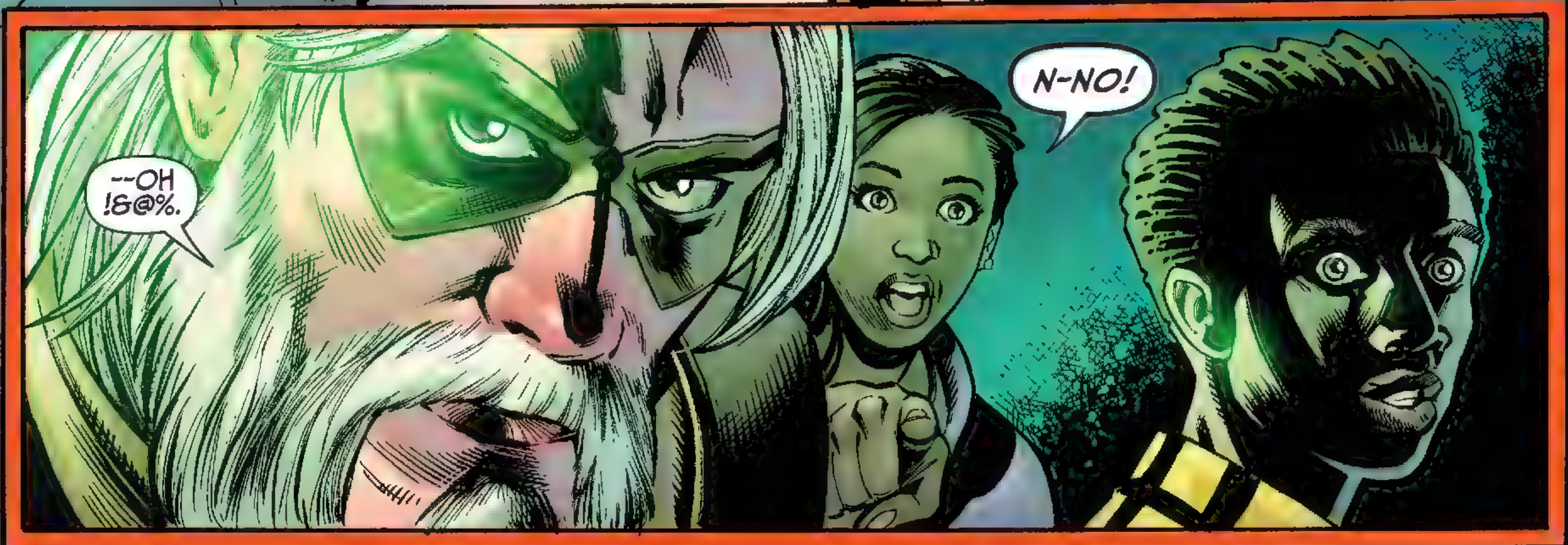
NOT WHILE GREEN ARROW'S STILL KICKIN'!

I TOLD YOU!

YOU REALLY ARE HIM! I-I'M MANSA. AND THIS IS MY SISTER--

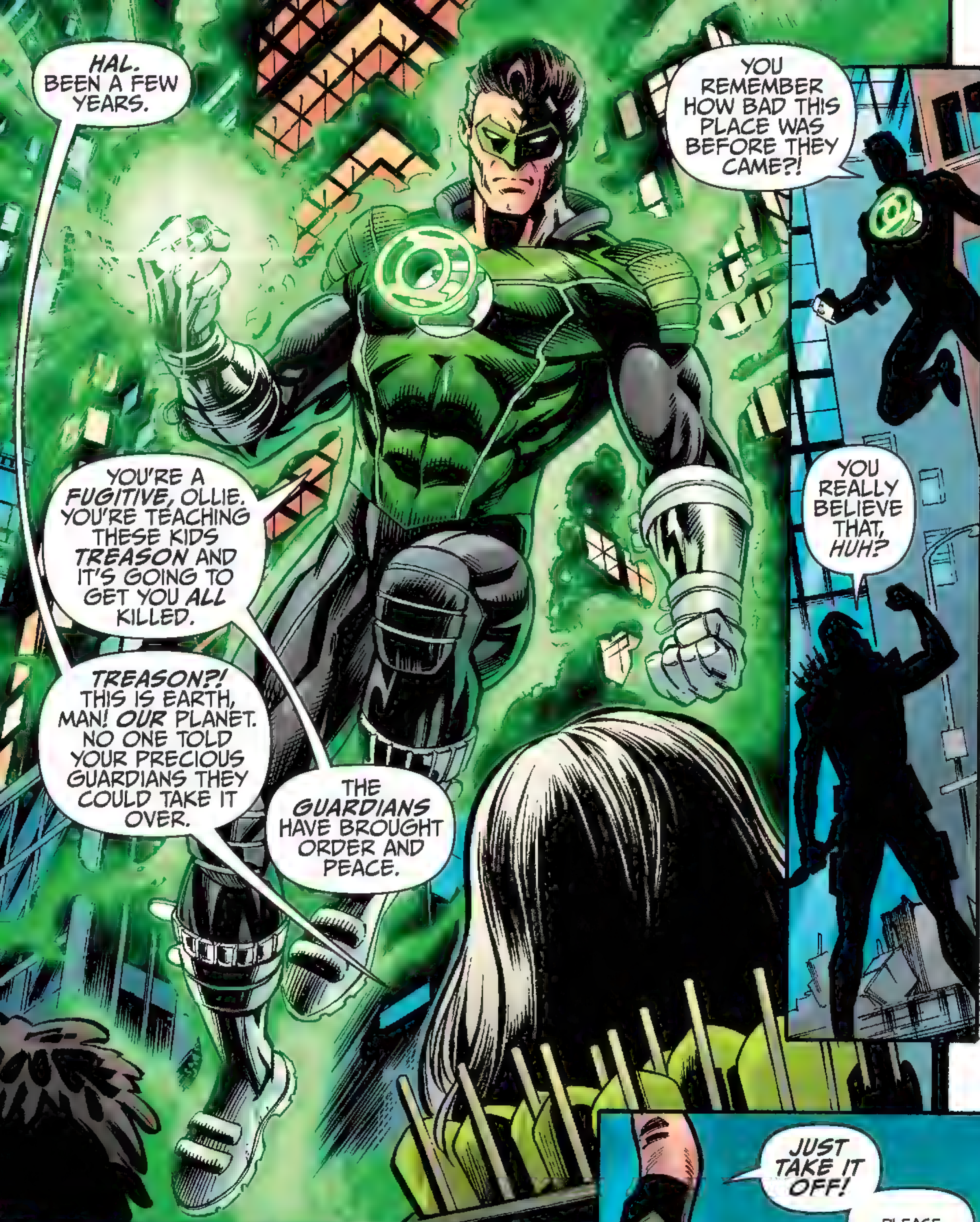
BOOM

LATER. YOU TWO WERE BRAVE TO MAKE IT THIS FAR, BUT WE'VE GOT TO GET TO THE SAFE HOUSE BEFORE--



--OH !\$@%.

N-NO!



HAL.
BEEN A FEW
YEARS.

YOU
REMEMBER
HOW BAD THIS
PLACE WAS
BEFORE THEY
CAME?!

YOU'RE A
FUGITIVE, OLLIE.
YOU'RE TEACHING
THESE KIDS
TREASON AND
IT'S GOING TO
GET YOU ALL
KILLED.

TREASON?!
THIS IS EARTH,
MAN! OUR PLANET.
NO ONE TOLD
YOUR PRECIOUS
GUARDIANS THEY
COULD TAKE IT
OVER.

THE
GUARDIANS
HAVE BROUGHT
ORDER AND
PEACE.

YOU
REALLY
BELIEVE
THAT,
HUH?



YOU'VE CHANGED,
GREEN LANTERN. SURE,
YOU USED TO BE A
STIFF. BUT YOU WERE
A *GOOD* MAN. THE
BEST MAN
I KNEW.

BUT NOW
YOU'RE TALKING
ABOUT KILLING
KIDS. *KIDS!*



DON'T YOU
SEE WHAT THOSE
GUARDIANS HAVE
DONE TO YOUR
MIND?

IT'S THEIR
SCUMMY LITTLE RING,
MAN. *WHISPERING*
TO YOU ALL DAY AND
NIGHT. TWISTING YOU
UP INSIDE.



JUST
TAKE IT
OFF!

PLEASE.



I CAN'T.

EARTH
NEEDS TO BE
PROTECTED.



GUESS
THIS IS HOW
IT'S GOT TO
BE, THEN,
BROTHER.



BUT
I GOT ONE
TRICK LEFT
IN MY BAG...
YELLOW
CEDAR.



AND IT'S
GOT YOUR
NAME ON
IT.

HARD-TRAVELED

WRITER: SALADIN AHMED
PENCILLER: SCOT EATON
INKER: NORM RAPMUND
COLORIST: HI-FI
LETTERER: ALW'S TROY PETERI

THE FEAR INDEX

WRITER
Brandon Thomas

ARTIST
Tom Mandrake

COLORIST
Sian Mandrake

LETTERER
Deron Bennett

THE INDEX IS AT EIGHT TONIGHT. IT'S NOT EXPECTED TO DROP BELOW SEVEN UNTIL NEXT WEEK.

PROFESSOR CRANE'S TOXIN HAS COVERED THE EARTH FOR OVER TWO YEARS NOW--EVEN I LOST TRACK OF THE EXACT NUMBER OF DAYS. THE "PERFECT RECORD" I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE KEEPING, FOR THE FUTURE GENERATIONS THAT FINALLY BEAT THIS THING...?

...AFTER LOSING NATASHA...IT JUST DIDN'T MATTER TO ME ANYMORE...

COME ON, MAN--NO, DON'T--





NNNNGGH.

WHERE
YOU GET
THAT MASK,
MAN?

TELL US
WHERE YOU
GOT IT...

...THINK HE'S
ALL GONE.
THE FEAR'S
GOT HIM
NOW.

NAH,
MAN...

...HE
BETTER TELL
US, OR THERE'S
GONNA BE
TROUBLE!

PFFFT

THOOM





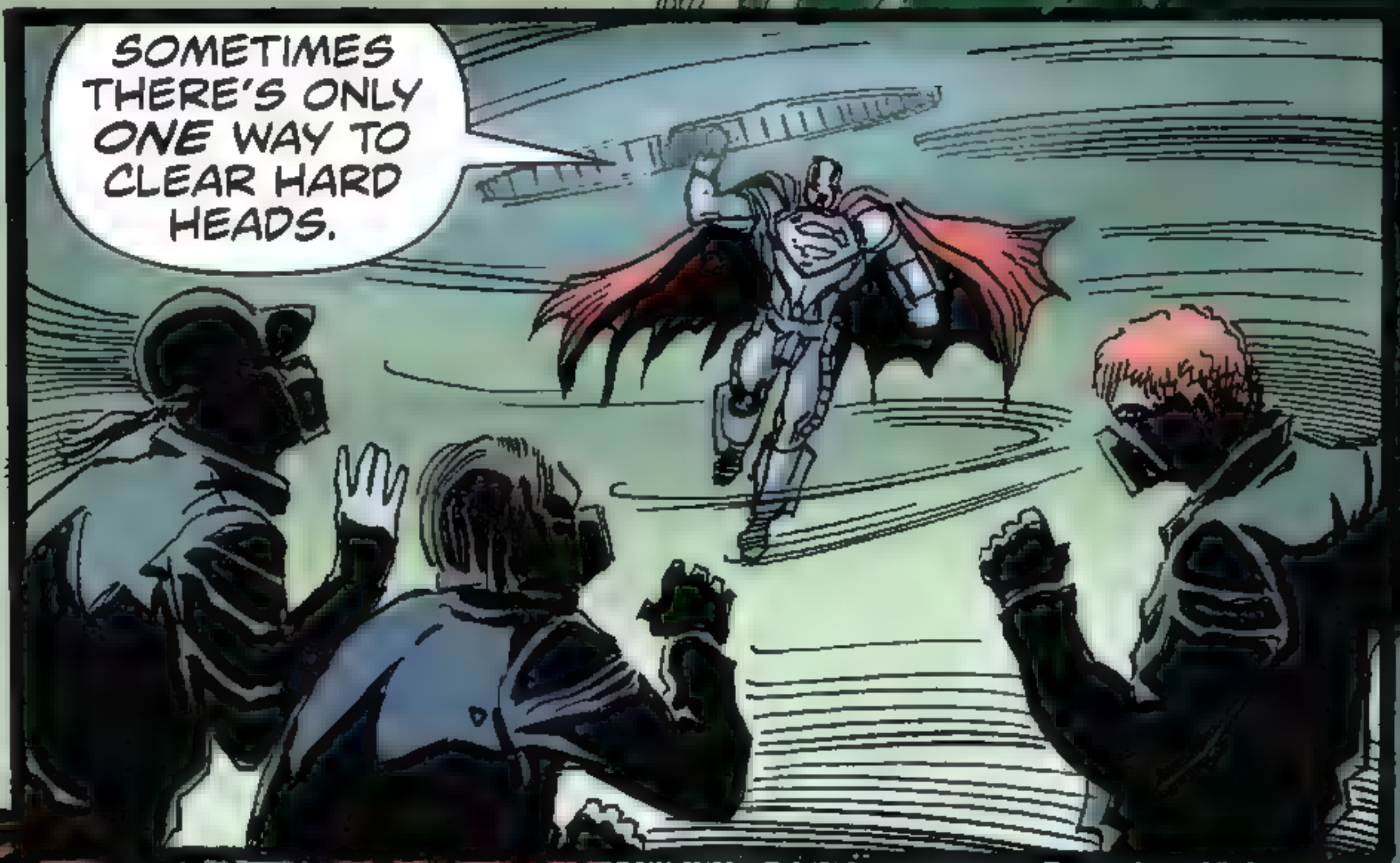
HEY MAN, WE SAW HIM FIRST!

IT'S HIM! IT'S HIM!

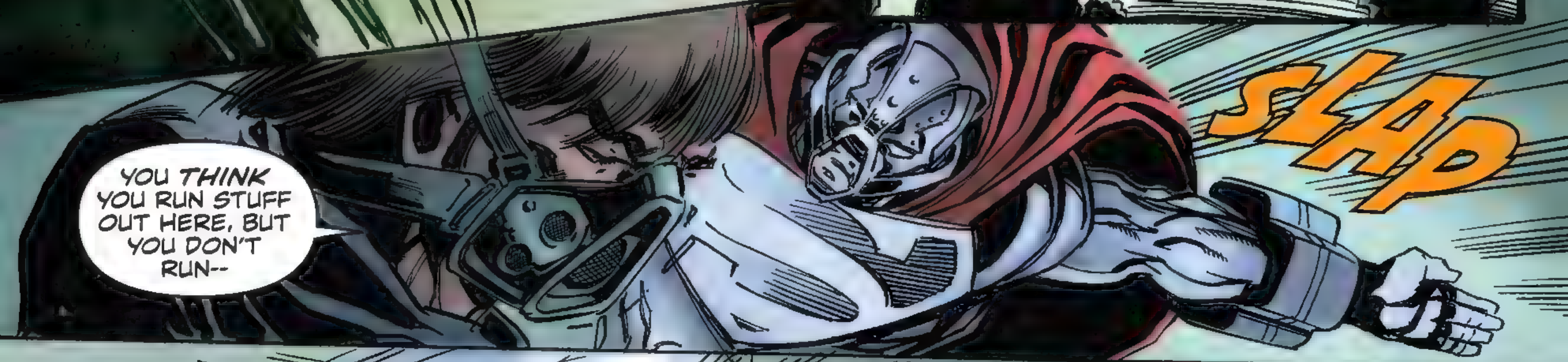
STAY LOW, KID...



...THIS'LL ONLY TAKE A MINUTE.

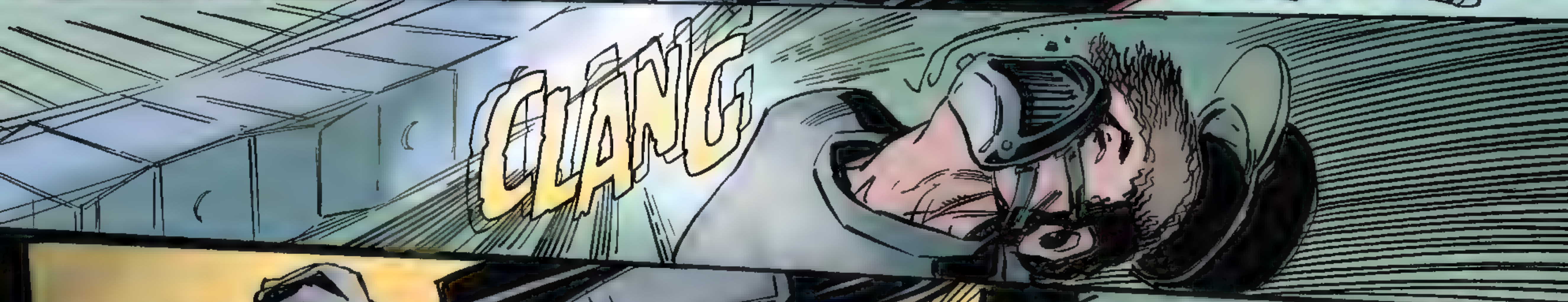


SOMETIMES THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO CLEAR HARD HEADS.



YOU THINK YOU RUN STUFF OUT HERE, BUT YOU DON'T RUN--

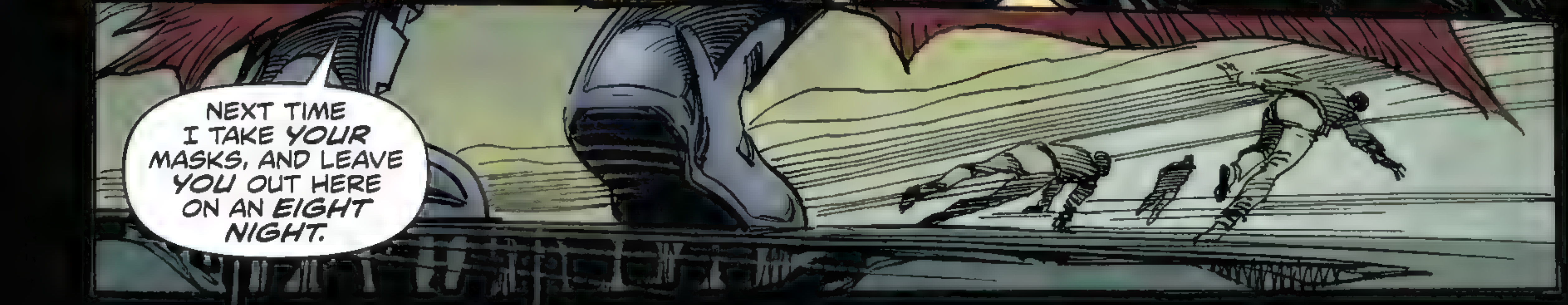
SLAP



CLANG



CRACK

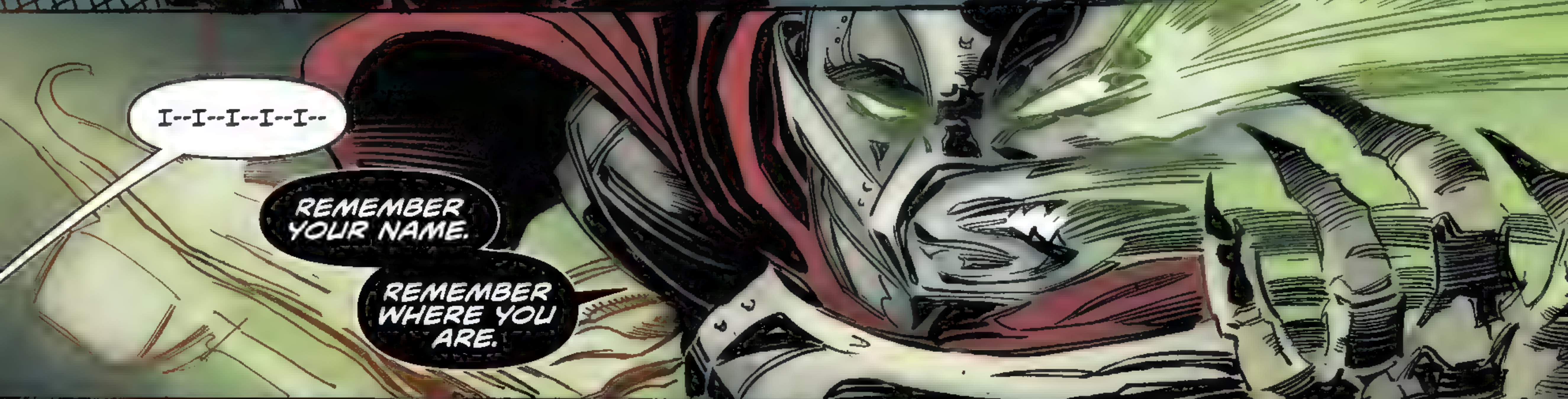


NEXT TIME I TAKE YOUR MASKS, AND LEAVE YOU OUT HERE ON AN EIGHT NIGHT.



BREATHE.

TRY AND
BREATHE.



I--I--I--I--I--

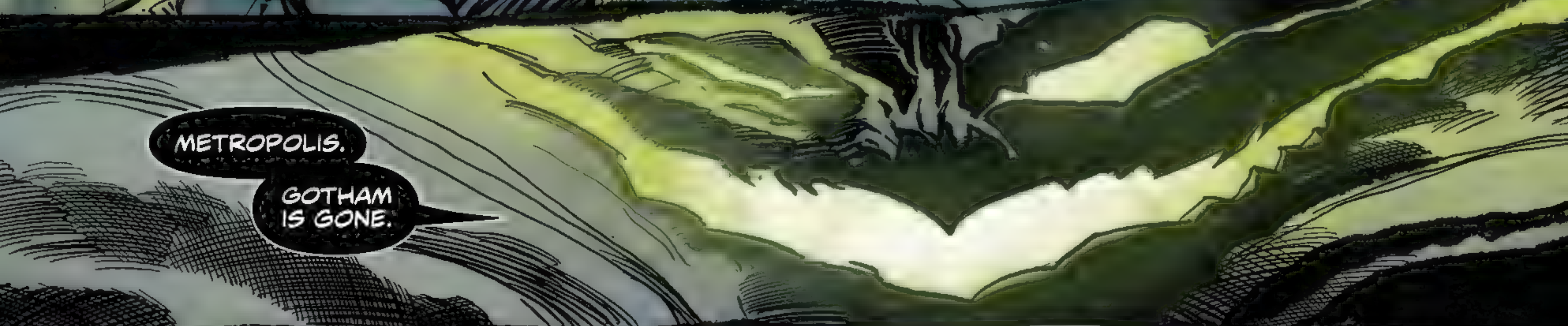
REMEMBER
YOUR NAME.

REMEMBER
WHERE YOU
ARE.



OKAY...
OKAY...I
CAN--

THIS IS--
IS IT STILL
CALLED...
GOTHAM?



METROPOLIS.

GOTHAM
IS GONE.



WAIT...
WHAT?

GONE.



GONE
LIKE
YOU.

THE IRONWORKS.

AAAAH!

PANT
PANT

TAKE IT
SLOW.

THE
ANTITOXIN
HAS A REAL
KICK.

STILL
WORKING ON IT...
BIT OF A LEARNING
CURVE, EVEN
FOR ME.

THANK YOU.
SERIOUSLY.

WHO--WHO
ARE YOU?

JOHN
HENRY
IRONS.

YOU?



JEAN-PAUL
VALLEY.

WAIT, IS
THAT--

--HOW? THE
INDEX IS AT EIGHT
TONIGHT...WITHOUT
PROTECTION YOU
SHOULD BE...YOU
SHOULD BE OUT OF
YOUR MIND RIGHT
NOW.

CRANE'S
GAS DOESN'T
HIT EVERYONE
THE EXACT
SAME WAY.

SO YOU'RE,
WHAT...
IMMUNE?

THERE'S
THIS
THEORY...

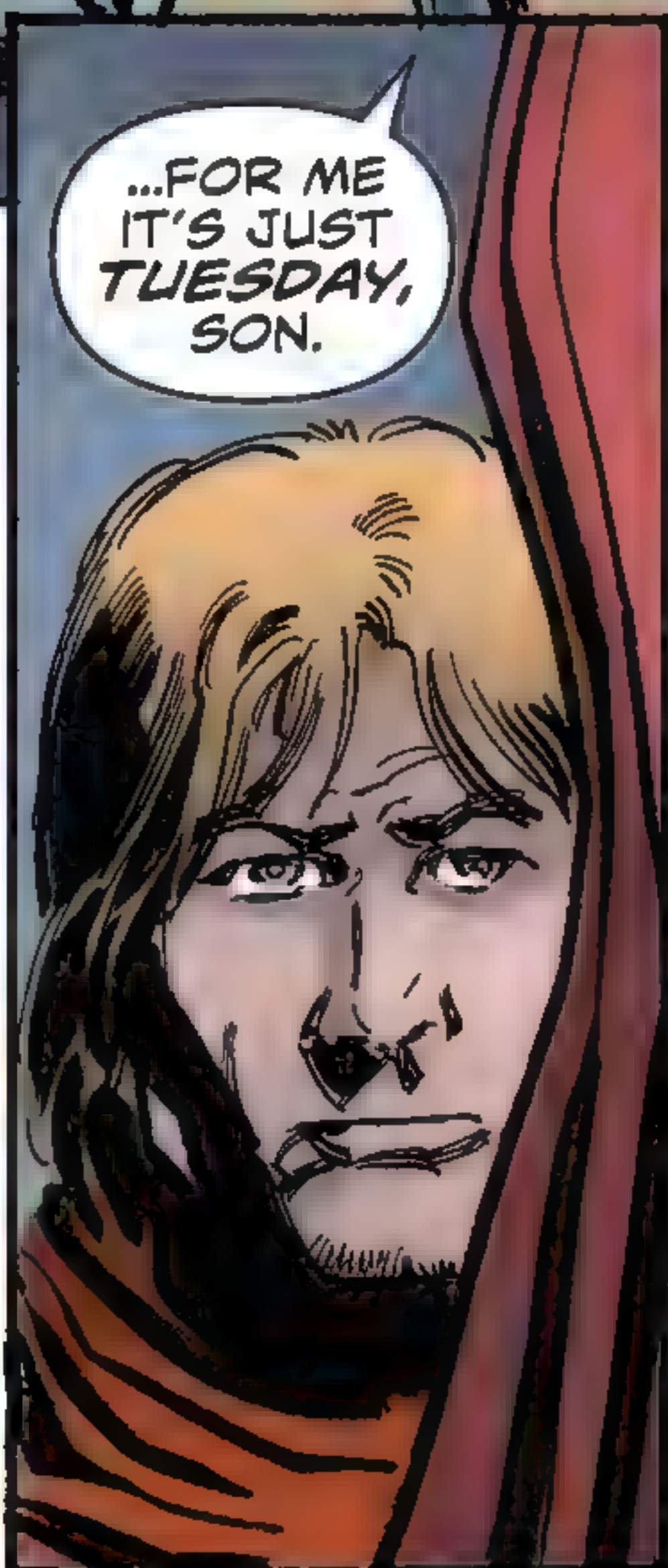
...SAYS THE THINGS
THAT SOME OF US,
AND OUR ANCESTORS,
HAVE BEEN FORCED TO
ENDURE--THE BRUTALITY
AND HUMILIATION--THE
OPPRESSION, AND THE
CONSTANT ATTACKS
ON OUR HUMANITY.

SOMETHING
GETS--CALLOUSED
INSIDE OF US, SO WE
CAN EVEN FUNCTION
WITHOUT TEARING IT
ALL DOWN.

YEAH, MAYBE
THE AIR IS FILLED
WITH FEAR NOW,
BUT FOR ME...

...FOR ME
IT'S JUST
TUESDAY,
SON.

...
CAN YOU--I
KNOW I CAN'T KNOW
EVERYTHING YOU'VE--
I CAN NEVER REALLY
KNOW, BUT--CAN YOU
TEACH ME, MR.
IRONS...?



I CAN TEACH YOU
HOW TO **FEEL** THAT
FEAR--THAT YOU'LL
LOSE EVERYTHING
THAT MATTERS AT ANY
MOMENT, THROUGH
NO REAL FAULT OF
YOUR OWN.

"I CAN TEACH
YOU HOW TO FEEL
THAT AND **STILL**
MOVE FORWARD.

"YOU JUST
HAVE TO BELIEVE
THAT THERE'S A DAY
COMING WHEN YOU
WON'T **NEED** TO.

"AND KNOW
HOW TO FIGHT
LONG ENOUGH
TO REACH IT."

UNTIL
THEN...

...THE
INDEX IS
STUCK AT
EIGHT.

AND THERE'S
ALWAYS
MORE WORK
TO DO.

END

The world is simple.
There's good. There's evil. And there's still...

BATMAN BLACK and WHITE

David Aja
John Arcudi
Corinna Bechko
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Sophie Campbell
Olivier Coipel
Nick Derington
Paul Dini
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And the SEVEN MAGIC LANDS



**WRITTEN BY
GEOFF JOHNS**



**ART BY
DALE EAGLESHAM
AND SCOTT KOLINS**

DECEMBER 2020

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In *Batman/Catwoman*, a new 12-issue DC Black Label series, Tom King re-teams with frequent collaborator Clay Mann—illustrator of several of Batman's key Bat/Cat moments—for a story that takes place in the couple's past, present, and future.



IN WHAT WAYS IS THIS A CONTINUATION OF YOUR WORK ON BATMAN, AND IN WHAT WAYS IS IT SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT?

TOM KING: It's the end of something. It's the end I always wanted to write for Batman and Catwoman, the culmination of not only what we did leading up to the wedding and afterwards, but of 80 years and counting of this relationship between a hero and a criminal.

But it's also the beginning of something: it's a standalone series, which is much more ambitious than anything I tried in *Batman*—my attempt to tell one story that says everything I have to say about these characters and how they affect each other and us.

CLAY MANN: I can't wait for the fans to see what we have been doing. It's really an honor to be wrapping up Tom's plan for Batman.

THIS SERIES TAKES PLACE IN THREE TIMELINES. WHAT UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE BAT/CAT RELATIONSHIP DOES THAT ALLOW YOU TO EXPLORE?

KING: The basic premise is we have three timelines that take off from *Batman Annual* #2 (the first and last kiss issue). We see Batman and Catwoman at the beginning of their relationship after that first kiss, we see them now, and we see the end, after that last kiss. What that does is allow for you to see genuine character evolution, how Catwoman went from being a rogue to a partner and what that transition got her and cost her.

PHANTASM, FROM THE BELOVED ANIMATED MOVIE *BATMAN: MASK OF THE PHANTASM*, MAKES HER DEBUT IN DC COMIC BOOK CONTINUITY IN THIS SERIES. WHAT ROLE DOES SHE PLAY?

MANN: For me, her role is huge. From lying in front of my grandma's TV watching the VHS she bought my brother and me to telling DC—all these years later—that she is my first choice of any character to do, she's been a dream of mine.

KING: She's central to the story. We want to honor how good that movie is, and what a cool and frightening character she is.

 **BLACK LABEL** AGES 17+

BATMAN/CATWOMAN #1 **ON SALE IN DECEMBER**

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The Last Kryptonian-DCP

